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MGK-A- 31155

26 July 1951

Chief, Foreign Division M

Chief of Station, Karlsruhe

Operational

KIBITZ - Critique of Field Problem

REF: MGK-A-30758

1. The referenced memo outlined the night problem which we ran with KIBITZ 10. We have little doubt that the problem was worthwhile as advanced training for the student, and certainly it taught us a few lessons. The problem as planned called for base radio contacts on two successive nights. The first night's transmissions were to be from operations run in the open country alternately using battery and generator power, the second night's transmissions to be from a clandestine set-up in a nearby hotel. However, as COMMO personnel pointed out so many security hazards in operating from a hotel or any other such uncontrolled indoor location (see Comment "a"), we decided to forego this second night phase of the problem.

2. As a preliminary preparation for the problem, it was deemed advisable to first have staff members make a dry run of the outdoor phase in order to check the timing of reaching the caches in simulated burials several kilometers from town, and setting up the equipment (in an isolated barn) within the time limits of first darkness and the signal time plan. Staff members [redacted], [redacted], [redacted], and [redacted] soon found that carrying a TR-1, storage battery, generator, and other impedementia for a transmitter base in some secluded sylvan rendezvous is no light task to be expected of one (or even four) physically handicapped agents (see Comment "b").

3. Further, after getting set up and going on the air with the battery power, we found that the power unit (which converts the battery to usable current for the radio) made a hum which could be disconcertingly heard at a distance of 50 yards (see Comment "c"). Nevertheless, we could not maintain contact with the base, due either to our weak signal or reception (see Comment "d"), nor could we pick it up again when we switched to the hand generator (see Comment "e").

4. However, assuming that the basic failure was with the faulty battery which caused us to lose contact initially, we proceeded with the actual field

Distribution:
~~2 - FDM~~
1 - COS
1 - KOB
1 - Commo

EXEMPTIONS Section 3(b)
(2)(A) Privacy ☐
(2)(B) Methods/Sources ☑
(2)(G) Foreign Relations ☐

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30-6-1-4717

problem with #10 as scheduled. But even with a different battery, the signal (or reception) in the field problem was again so poor that we lost base contact after but a few minutes.

Comments:

a. COMMO pointed out that the benefits of orientating an agent to the clandestine activity of smuggling contraband radio equipment into a hotel (or any other uncontrolled indoor operating site) might not be worth the risk of an incident which may be caused by:

1. Operating on usually already overtaxed power supply could blow the house fuses (the hum of the power unit almost precludes the use of a portable power unit).

2. Keying will likely incur sympathetic flickers in every light bulb on the same power line.

3. Key clicks (if not the entire transmission) might be picked up on every radio in the vicinity.

While this development dampens some of our preconceived notions of clandestine agent activity, we are wondering whether all transmitters pull so much current as to be so reflected in the power supply (1) and (2) above. If so, the agent kit should include a practicable means for constant test of the available current plus some sort of auxiliary condenser which would store up the power to level out the surge loads of keying. Further, as for (3), it would appear as though we should be using a more directional type of transmitter.

b. We shall have to revise our estimates of the number of agents required to make up a team. In transporting equipment from secure caches to alternate sites of operation, at least two scouts will be needed to act as eyes and ears for the three panting porters struggling with the equipment.

c. Fortunately we learned of this on time to provide for a perimeter security detail (with silent and invisible (??) warning signals). In some cases this can require even more than five people.

d. In both the dry run and in the final problem, it was indeterminable whether our signal was too weak or even non-existent - the TR-1 is not designed to permit the sender to hear his own transmission as he sends. Thus he is required to work in a vacuum of not knowing whether or not his set (or power supply) is functioning to produce a signal, or whether the lack of response from base is just in his faulty tuning.

e. The hand generator might be a government issue solution to undependable storage power (and the agents are not likely to have access to better equipment than we today). But after the experience of implementing the generator and noting the concensus of the varying degrees of stouthearted manhood represented on the problem, one is immediately caused to review our present day agents to estimate how often and how many of them will risk lugging their equipment out into the forest and grinding away for a half hour (the minimum signal plan time) without response before losing faith.

5. Needless to say, we are a little disappointed with the findings of our two tests (run with experienced communications personnel in attendance). However, our pessimism is not entirely due to these immediate failures. What bothers us more is the fact that we have been repeatedly assured that the stay-behind program is being given adequate and proven technical support. And as non-technical personnel, I suppose we should accept these assurances. However, as we have gone into the matter, experiences to date have shown limitations and faults which would have precluded the receipt of even one single agent transmission! Now we are staggered with the thought of the apparent need for our limited staff of three to proceed through the entire gamut of the technical aspects of the stay-behind program, from repeatedly testing burial packages to final transmissions under all probable operating conditions in order to determine for ourselves just how many bugs there are in it.